Sermon Notes

February 23, 2020

Transfiguration

On transfiguration Sunday I usually take some potshots at St. Peter. Harking back to his propensity to open mouth and insert foot.

This year I am taking a different tack.

Questions: How did this rough and ready fisherman, who spoke when no words were needed become the man who wrote the words of 2 Peter 3:16-ff, an important leader of the church? Why did Jesus choose him? What experiences formed him into the leader that he became?

* We can’t really fault Peter for wanting to mark this magnificent event with a structure
  + Many highlights of the Bible story occur upon a mountain top
    - Noah’s Ark came to rest there and he built an altar
    - Moses received the ten commandments on Mt. Sinai and the tablets written on by God’s hand were kept in the Ark of the Covenant throughout OT history
    - Jesus preached his most famous sermon on the side of the mountain
    - Finally, he ascended from the mountain
* Mountain top experiences are important—
  + Think of those times when you saw God’s glory
  + Wesleyan Christians put a lot of store in “experience”
  + Some Christians believe that there is a particular moment when we are “saved.”
* But what really shapes or faith and helps us grow as Christians is how we live in the valleys
  + St. Peter followed Jesus down from the mountain and witnessed how the one that was glorified and affirmed by God went about healing and serving others
  + And Peter made mistakes
    - Trying to talk Jesus out of going to Jerusalem
    - Trying to use force to defend Jesus in the Garden and then abandoning him when he was arrested
    - Denying him at his trial
    - And even after the resurrection when he was prejudiced against the gentile believers.
  + The important thing about his mistakes was that he “listened to Jesus”
    - When Jesus called him “Satan” that must have been a wake- up call
    - Jesus admonished him for using a sword to defend him
    - Jesus gave him forgiveness on the beach for his denial
    - Jesus corrected his faulty ideas about the gentiles with a vision.
* I believe there is a little of Peter in all of us
  + Yes, we need those times when we see God’s glory unwrapped
  + But it is in our everyday lives that we grow into true disciples of Jesus
* How do we live in the valleys; Questions for consideration
  + Do we want to protect ourselves?
    - Ready to fight for the way we think things ought to be
    - Do we truly love those we consider to be our enemies
      * Theologically
      * Politically
      * Socially
  + Do we deny Jesus by the way we live our lives?
    - Do we profess love in the sanctuary
    - Then spew hatred and prejudice in our homes and hangouts?
  + Are we critical of those who are not like us?